

Present: Dwight Baker; Andy Bennett; Hans Brandal; John Coney; Dick Burkhart, Chair; Ray Day, Jr.; Dave Elliott, Vice-Chair; Holly Plackett; Anirudh Sahni; Joan Sells; Mike Taylor

Excused: John Jensen; Sandy Paul-Lyle

Staff: Barbara de Michele, Community Relations Planner; Ron Posthuma, King County Department of Transportation Assistant Director; Liz Krenzel, Bus Tunnel Closure Project Manager

Dick Burkhart called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Councilmember Lunch

Transit Advisory Committee members set the date for a luncheon with Councilmember Dunn, chair, Regional Transit Committee and Councilmember Patterson, chair, Transportation Committee for Wednesday, March 15. De Michele will send further details to the committee as arrangements are formalized.

Legislative Report

Posthuma reviewed the status of legislative priorities for King County in the current session. This year's priorities include: 1) a regional transportation bill; 2) improvements to the Commute Trip Reduction law; 3) passenger-only ferry legislation.

The House and Senate will negotiate a final transportation bill, and Metro is watching the situation closely. Legislation on passenger ferries, specifically guaranteeing that Vashon Island receives continuous service, is moving forward and is likely to pass both the House and Senate. Broad support exists for refinements to the Commute Trip Reduction act, so that funding can be focused on employment centers rather than counties. Some counties have indicated that they do not need the funding, while others only need it for targeted areas. Metro is also watching the supplemental budget. Funding is included in the budget for increased service from Kent-Auburn to SeaTac, for breaking the bottleneck at Stewart and Howell, and for expansion of the Brickyard Park and Ride lot.

At the federal level, Metro is seeking funding from the Transportation Budget for a new bus radio system, for replacing the Tolt Bridge, for the Vashon passenger-only ferry (if needed), and for the I-405 Bus Rapid Transit project.

Tunnel Closure Report

Krenzel provided TAC members with an extensive analysis of results following the closure of the transit tunnel. Transit time through downtown Seattle has increased by 11%, very close to the 11.8% increase that was predicted by traffic modeling. The city has experienced an increase in traffic volumes on First and Sixth avenues, again a predictable response to Third Avenue being designated for transit only. Metro continues to work on the traffic jams along the Stewart Street corridor, which is responsible for many delays in bus schedules. Metro is also adjusting bus schedules

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based on information gathered after the tunnel closure. In a customer survey, 62% of riders said their commute was “about the same;” and 31% said it was “harder” to reach their destinations. Ninety-five percent said they were adequately informed about the closure and 75% knew that the closure was a “multi-agency effort.”

In response to a question about leaving Third Avenue as a busway, Krenzel said that is a topic for numerous agencies – Metro, the City of Seattle, Sound Transit, WSDOT -- to answer. The use of Third Avenue as a busway is under consideration as part of the planning and/or mitigation for the Alaskan Way Viaduct construction period.

Work Plan

Members reviewed, edited and approved the 2006 work plan as amended. De Michele will update the workplan and send it to members via e-mail.

Committee Business

- Burkhart reported on the recent King County Transportation Forum and the Regional Transit Committee meeting.
- Paul-Lyle was absent in order to attend the Auburn-Kent Sounding Board meeting. In her absence, de Michele reported that the A-K Sounding Board is wrapping up its recommendation. Over 1600 people participated in the survey sent to residents of South King County.
- Plackett reported on the Central-Eastside Sounding Board, which is now on hiatus while staff prepares the tabloid and public meetings for an outreach period in late April.
- Burkhart requested that the TAC write a letter of support for the Transportation Benefit District section of Representative Murray's regional transportation bill. After some discussion, Taylor moved and Brandal seconded that the discussion be tabled for now, allowing the group to take the idea up again if it is moved into the 2007 legislative session. The motion was passed 8-2 with one abstention.

Adjournment

Burkhart adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:40 p.m.